Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraphs starting on line 26 of page 5 as follows:

FIGURE 3 is a functional block diagram of an alerts system for using web services to notify a subscriber that an event has occurred at a voice mail switch, in accordance with aspects of the invention. Alerts system 300 includes web service interface 302, notification server 304, web server 306 and voice mail switch 308. Notification server 304 links web service interface 302 to web server 306. Web server 306 links voice mail switch [[308]]308 to notification server 304. Voice mail switch 306 can be part of any voice mail system that the subscriber's telephone carrier has in place. Voice mail switch [[306]]308 includes voice mail store [[308]]314.

Web service interface 302 includes user website 310 and administrative website 312. User website 310 provides an interface to allow the subscriber to sign up for and configure alerts system 300. The opt-in aspect of alerts system 300 prevents carriers from sending unsolicited messages to those who have not subscribed to alerts system 300. The subscriber can register an authorized voice mailbox located at voice mail switch 308 by entering an identifier such as the phone number associated with the voice mailbox. According to one embodiment, the subscriber may also enter other unique data, such as an access code, to further prevent unauthorized use of the alerts service. The subscriber's personal information is stored in notification server 304. Notification server 304 generates a personal unique identifier (PUID) to identify the subscriber such that the PUID correlates to a corresponding identifier. After the subscriber has registered for the alerts service, the telephone carrier can perform access code verification for the addition of new voice mailboxes. User website [[308]]310 also provides an interface for cancellation of the alerts service.

Administrative website 312 provides an interface for an administrator, such as a customer service representative from the telephone carrier, to manage and report on registered accounts. The administrator can also perform other functions such as send custom alerts, inactivate a subscriber's account, and delete a registration.

Notification server 304 collects events and subscriptions, generates alerts, and then distributes the alerts to external delivery channels. The delivery channels use custom protocols to send the alerts to a destination designated by the subscriber. For example, the alerts may be sent to a computing device such as a personal computer. Notification server 304 receives input data from the subscriber via user website [[308]]310. The input data can include the identifier associated with the subscriber's voice mailbox, such as a telephone number, and any other authorization data.